NUMB. LXII.

The GUARDIAN.

O Fortunatos nimium ſua ſi bona norint! Virg.

Friday, May 22. 1713.

UPON the late Election of *King's* Scholars, my Curioſity drew me to *Weſtminſter* School. The ſight of a Place where I had not been for many Years, revived in my Thoughts the tender Images of my Childhood, which by a great length of Time had contracted a Softneſs that rendered them inexpreſſibly agreeable. As it is uſual with me to draw a ſecret unenvied Pleaſure from a thouſand Incidents overlooked by other Men, I threw my ſelf into a ſhort Tranſport, forgetting my Age, and fancying my ſelf a School-boy.

This Imagination was ſtrongly favoured by the Preſence of ſo many young Boys, in whoſe Looks were legible the ſprightly Paſſions of that Age, which raiſed in me a ſort of Sympathy. Warm Blood thrilled thro' every Vein; the faded Memory of thoſe Enjoyments that once gave me Pleaſure, put on more lively Colours, and a thouſand gay Amuſements filled my Mind.

It was not without Regret, that I was forſaken by this waking Dream. The Cheapneſs of Puerile Delights, the guiltleſs Joy they leave upon the Mind, the blooming Hopes that lift up the Soul in the aſcent of Life, the Pleaſure that attends the gradual opening of the Imagination, and the Dawn of Reaſon, made me think moſt Men found that Stage the moſt agreeable part of their Journey.

When Men come to riper Years, the innocent Diverſions which exalted the Spirits, and produced Health of Body, Indolence of Mind, and refreſhing Slumbers, are too oft exchanged for Criminal Delights, which fill the Soul with Anguiſh, and the Body with Diſeaſe. The grateful Employment of admiring and raiſing themſelves to an Imitation of the polite Stile, beautiful Images, and noble Sentiments of Ancient Authors, is abandoned for Law-*Latin*, the Lucubrations of our Paltry Newſ-mongers, and that ſwarm of vile Pamphlets which corrupt our Taſte, and infeſt the Publick. The Ideas of Virtue, which the Characters of Heroes had imprinted on their Minds; inſenſibly wear out, and they come to be influenced by the nearer Examples of a degenerate Age.

In the Morning of Life, when the Soul firſt makes her Entrance into the World, all things look freſh and gay; their Novelty ſurpriſes, and every little Glitter or gaudy Colour tranſports the Stranger. But by degrees the Senſe grows callous, and we loſe that exquiſite Reliſh of Trifles, by the time our Minds ſhou'd be ſuppoſed ripe for Rational Entertainments. I cannot make this Reflection without being touched with a Commiſeration of that Species called *Beaux*, the Happineſs of thoſe Men neceſſarily terminating with their Childhood; who, from a want of knowing other Purſuits, continue a Fondneſs for the Delights of that Age after the Reliſh of them is decay'd.

Providence hath with a bountiful Hand prepared Variety of Pleaſures for the various Stages of Life. It behoves us not to be wanting to our ſelves, in forwarding the Intention of Nature, by the culture of our Minds, and a due Preparation of each Faculty for the Enjoyment of thoſe Objects it is capable of being affected with.

As our Parts open and diſplay by gentle degrees, we riſe from the Gratifications of Senſe, to reliſh thoſe of the Mind. In the Scale of Pleaſure the loweſt are ſenſual Delights, which are ſucceeded by the more enlarged Views and gay Portraitures of a lively Imagination; and theſe give way to the ſublimer Pleaſures of Reaſon, which diſcovers the Cauſes and Deſigns, the Frame, Connexion and Symmetry of Things, and fills the Mind with the Contemplation of intellectual Beauty, Order and T[illegible]

Hence I regard our publick Schools and U[illegible]ſities, not only as Nurſeries of Men for the Service of the Church and State, but alſo as Places deſigned to teach Mankind the moſt refined Luxury, to raiſe the Mind to its due Perfection, and give it a Taſte

(Price Two Pence.)